

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

The Normal Reader	76
Classifiers or Witchdoctors	78
Mobile Libraries	
A Tardy Toot	80
An Angry Honk	81
Annual General Meeting	83
The Librarian Educator	84
Point of No Return	86
Assistance to Staff	87
Council Notes	88
Your Letters	90

**Winchester
Conference Report**
page 73

CEDRIC CHIVERS LTD.

PORTWAY, BATH

BOOKBINDERS

AND

BOOKSELLERS

TELEGRAMS

"DUROFLEX," BATH

TELEPHONE

7355, BATH

BENLOCK LTD.

Library Bookbinders & Booksellers

BINDING

**SOUND WORKMANSHIP
AT COMPETITIVE PRICES**

All Enquiries welcomed at

BENLOCK LTD., NELSON ST., SOUTH BANK

MIDDLESBROUGH

Telephone : South Bank 58529

YORKS.



LIBRACO

are the makers of
L I B R A R Y
F U R N I T U R E
and
E Q U I P M E N T

It is the best in
DESIGN
QUALITY
WORKMANSHIP
and **FINISH**

It is used all over the world
and
gives a lifetime of service

Illustrated lists, designs, and estimates free from
Lombard Wall, Woolwich Road
CHARLTON, S.E.7

Telephone: GREENWICH 3308/9

**THE
WOOLSTON BOOK CO.
Limited**

**THE HOUSE FOR
COMPLETE LIBRARY SERVICE**

*BOOKS supplied SERVICED,
REINFORCED and PLASTIC JACKETED
ready to be placed on the shelves*

Equipment :

BOOK CARDS.	PLASTIC CHARGING
BOOK PLATES.	GUIDES.
BOOK POCKETS.	DATE SLIPS.
BOOK SUPPORTS.	PLASTIC JACKETS.
BOOK REPAIR	THE ELECTRIC
MATERIALS.	STYLUS.
CARD CATALOGUE	TRANSFER PAPERS.
CABINETS.	GOLD LEAF.
CATALOGUE CARDS.	SHELF LABEL
CARD CHARGING	HOLDERS.
TRAYS.	PLASTIC SHELF
	LABELS.

Sole Agents for :

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.
THE FOREST PRESS, INC., Publishers of
THE DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION.

**The LIBRARY
BOOKSELLERS**

THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians
(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: W. G. SMITH.

Westminster Public Libraries, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

VOL. 50 NO. 5

MAY, 1957

The Compleat Librarian

The Editor's Report of The A.A.L. Conference at Winchester

WHAT good is a conference? Well, we learnt of libraries where they work a six-day week with a half-day off every third week; we heard of a splendid scheme for exchanging staff between Holborn, Birmingham, Nottingham and Derby County; of a chief librarian who actively discouraged his staff from attending meetings; of various training schemes; and the views of many young people on their salaries and conditions. Now, if some of these good schemes are adopted elsewhere, and if some of the staff in the bad libraries agitate more to have them improved in the light of the information gained, the conference will have been a success.

The numbers were a little overwhelming, with over 180 assistants turning up at a glorious spot overlooking the Hampshire downs. They found themselves in a teacher's training college with hard beds, good food, cheerful staff, and, we hope, good company. Your Editor only just survived a valiant attempt to drown him in a surfeit of lemon-meringue pie, Ron Surridge found a polite note in his room from its normal inmate asking him to water the cactus, while the Treasurer, aptly enough, was greeted with large texts designed to save his soul. A horde of amateur photographers seemed to find the national officers permanently encumbered with the products of the local beer emporium, which perhaps led to the resolution submitted from Manchester that training courses should be held to bring the divisional members "up to national drinking standards."

The social success of the week-end was the playing of the Winchester City Jazz Men which led to a display of gymnastic dancing unrivalled at any previous conference (or, we suspect, anywhere else). The performance of Roy "Snakehips" McColvin indeed led someone to speculate that he had "not only ants in his pants, but the whole darned zoo."

The Candidate.

The large attendance destroyed the plan of small discussion groups, but, in spite of that, they proved much more fun and more instructive than any kind of formal meeting. Here was a true exchange of practical ideas which benefited the older members as much as the new assistant.

Mr. Tynemouth led the discussions on the new entrant to librarianship. What did libraries want from candidates for jobs; what did they want from us; and how can we get better ones?

There was little disagreement over academic qualifications, five G.C.E.

passes being thought adequate. Some wanted to restrict the number of times a member could sit any one part of the L.A. examinations, while others stoutly maintained the "freedom to fail."

Interviews for jobs should be conducted by one or two librarians in an informal manner (there are apparently still some very backward authorities where the poor sixteen-year-old has to appear before the full libraries committee). Someone produced a seven point plan from an "improbable institute of psychology" which Mr. Tynemouth suggested we see but not use!

What qualities should the new recruit possess? A minority maintained that an interest in books was not necessarily important: a wide variety of interest, knowledge of what is going on in the world, and a lively personality were thought to be the important things. Others thought that some book knowledge and even a critical approach to reading is important although all recognised the danger of employing the "literary recluse."

The Junior

Why does the good candidate become in a few months a disgruntled junior handing in his notice to "go into insurance"? "Money" was the firm answer of one group in spite of determined efforts of discussion leader Godfrey Thompson to suggest otherwise. Other groups were less mercenary and suggested that the hours might have something to do with it; boys, in particular, needing Saturdays free to participate in sport. Above all, time and time again the words *Boredom* and *Drudgery* were mentioned as the main cause of disgruntlement.

What is the answer? Good in-service training helps the new entrant to understand the need for the various routines. There is no better method of doing this than by personal instruction from an enthusiastic senior, but a good second best is more formal instruction to groups of juniors. Mr. Thompson explained how in Hull newcomers are given a fortnight's solid course of training. "How horrible," rejoined Holborn's Miss Nattee (thereby proving that Mr. Thompson was an excellent discussion leader who had succeeded in getting young people to be very outspoken). Most people seemed to prefer something less drastic such as a session once a week. There was much more approval for Hull's methods in which dummy counters are set up and the Deputy plays the part of an irate reader in order to demonstrate how such customers should be handled.

Over and over again in this discussion, the importance of the attitude of the middle ranks of staff was emphasised and we found with regret that enthusiasm is not coming from the average badly underpaid departmental head and senior assistant.

Should juniors be readers' advisers? Everyone agreed that this was good for the junior, but bad for the reader, and so an inevitable compromise was reached in which it was suggested that juniors should "sit in" with seniors doing this sort of work.

There were many complaints about inhuman administration. Typical of this is the staff instruction:—"With effect from next Monday, Jane Jones will be transferred from East Branch to Central Lending." Jane has this sprung upon her without any previous consultation or even a friendly verbal tip, and naturally feels upset not so much at the order as at the way it is given. Ought there not to be some channel by which juniors could express their view to senior officers without being victimised (we heard tale of branches which were regarded as punishment stations for agitators, although, in contrast, the Editor insisted that every time he

agitated he was promoted!). Staff Guilds, in principle, were very unpopular, but there really seems no alternative.

It is MOST IMPORTANT that the junior should not have the feeling of being just one of the crowd; if he is convinced that he is an important part of a team, he will want to stay in librarianship.

The Student

The main argument in favour of full-time schools seemed to be that they might be great fun. Mr. Lockwood, one of the Brighton School of Librarianship, took bravely on the chin various criticisms of tutors ("They have ceased to be librarians, they are not trained teachers, so what are they?"). He valiantly defended some of his colleagues who were alleged to write and talk too much, claiming that there was a need for this in order to get ideas circulated, argued and grumbled about.

Theoretical advantages of having fewer and larger library schools seemed outweighed by considerable sentiment in favour of smaller groups, but no doubt Mr. Lockwood's large following of ex-Brighton Belles was the decisive factor here. There seemed little interest in attaching schools to universities, but a good deal in favour of linking them to good libraries.

The Professional

Mr. Clough, leading discussions on the professional librarian, found his groups rather naively deciding that since librarianship was for the social good, it was, therefore, a profession. Some, however, complained of a lack of philosophy and purpose. Breadth of interest, a "curious" mind, and a mental outlook conditioned by a course of intensive study outside the L.A. syllabus, were some of the qualities of the ideal professional (this seemed to contradict the earlier decision that five passes of G.C.E. are sufficient). Reading, in itself, was not considered of great value, but "personality is everything."

The librarian must keep in touch with recent developments in his profession, and this led to "an examination of the L.A. in very general terms, which I thought was the decent thing to do," said Mr. Clough. To his "surprise and astonishment" there were people present who considered that the *Record* is doing a good job. Other professional periodicals were "sighed over," and it was suggested that the Schools might combine to publish a journal. One other idea was that the *Record* should become a quarterly with *Liaison* changing its title to *Library Reveille* and publishing weekly.

At the final summing-up session, President Miss Willson seemed disappointed that there were not more definite conclusions forthcoming but that was probably inevitable with a subject of this nature. Many will agree with Mr. Lockwood, "I have learned a great deal of other people's views which will help me to form my own views." That is the value of a conference.

Brighton School of Librarianship Old Students Association

In an effort to form an Old Students' Association, a group of ex-students from Brighton Library School met at the A.A.L. Conference at Winchester, and have formed a nucleus of an Association which it is hoped all past members of the School will support. An initial subscription of 2s. 6d. is to be charged for the first year and a renunion is to be held at Brighton in September.

Will all old students who are interested write to:—DAVID W. BROMLEY, 178, Binley Road, Coventry.



THE NORMAL READER

*Some observations on
Branchmanship*

*By Geoffrey Langley
Nottingham Public Libraries*

ALL librarians who are in constant contact with the public know that the reaction of an average citizen to a given circumstance or situation can be forecast with some accuracy. In so far as this applies to the borrowing and use of fiction stock the following reactions have been observed in an urban branch library of moderate size over a period of some years.

THE REACTIONS

The Unusual Shape.

Readers are very cautious in their approach towards unusual shapes in books. When confronted with a tall work of fiction they pass it by. This, it has been observed, does not take the form of an appreciation followed by a considered rejection, but a definite antipathy towards the accidental oddity presented to the eye; the seasoned reader acquires in time a power of selective vision which automatically rejects all but Crown Octavo without, apparently, being aware of it. An exception must be made in cases where the large size retains the dust-jacket. In such a case it is issued without any difficulty, unless, of course, it happens to be published by Gollancz. Examples of this selective vision can be seen in cases where the library possesses copies of the same work in both Crown Octavo and a larger size: in such a case the larger size will remain on the shelf while the normal one is issued. Is this due to the widespread impression that a large book is a heavy book and, consequently, a dull book?

The Book Beautiful : Oddities in Binding.

A corollary of the above is the reaction to unusual colour combinations or unfamiliar spine designs. When these are combined with the Unusual Shape then the fate of the work is assured: only a drastic re-binding will ever get it off the shelf. When it is a standard Crown Octavo the result is in doubt: *The Asiatics* (Prokosch) is a good example. This book issued rapidly until the jacket was removed, revealing a pink-and-purple decor enriched with a curly panel on the spine. Two copies of this work have been in permanent residence on the shelves ever since. (There is some doubt here, of course, as to whether this illustrates a craving for normality on the part of the reader, or simply a sound artistic sense).

Fine Printing.

The "Book Beautiful" tends to suffer a similar fate. These books, when their idiosyncracies are confined to their insides, are sometimes

issued on their titles alone, but unless they have some especially powerful and compelling theme generally remain fresh and clean after about page six. They fall into several well-defined groups:—

(a) Books using unusual type-faces (not necessarily exotic ones). Cheltenham is a good example, but there are many others. This also applies to type-faces which, though normal in most respects, have yet some marked eccentricity: the affected “st” ligature in many pre-war books (and at least one current professional journal) comes to mind at once, as does the lower-case “g” in the Perpetua family. The verdict of the public is usually “there’s something funny about this print.”

(b) Works of fiction with illustrations, other than the classics, are avoided: whether because their being illustrated savours of childishness, of oddity, or of artiness is in doubt. Decorations, head- and tail-borders and anything in the nature of floriated or decorative initials are also viewed with misgiving. It is true that such things tend to obtrude themselves between the reader and the story and provide a source of irritation: there may also be an instinctive realisation on the part of the reader that books treated in this manner are usually aggressively literary and often obstinately unreadable. For some reason, wood-cuts are easily the most unpopular. The observations made in (a) and (b) above apply, naturally, to marginal authors only. Collins’ Romances would issue if they were printed in black letter in two folio volumes.

(c) Books whose titles run vertically. Unless these happen to be the only form in which a very popular author is obtainable (as for instance Dorothy L. Sayers) they remain on the shelf. When re-bound, be the new horizontal letter never so small, they issue well.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

This tendency of regular fiction readers to establish a groove, and thereafter automatically to follow it, may be used, together with an appreciation of their group psychology, to combat the above prejudices and to even out the use made of the stock. Some reliable methods are:—

The Shelf Switch.

Most gratifying results may be obtained by exchanging the bay to which returned novels are taken with a less-used section of the fiction stock. This has been known to empty S—Z almost completely for months, during which time Zola, Zweig, Frances Brett Young and Hugh Walpole enjoyed unprecedented popularity.

The Duplicate Split.

This is an extension of the Shelf Switch, and is to be used in the common events of duplicate copies coming together on the shelf. Often this will result in the issue of neither. If, however, one copy is removed and placed on the “returned books” shelves the probability is that both will go. This can also be applied to any work of fiction that sticks.

White Sepulchres.

The attraction which piles of apparently forbidden books have for readers is widely known. Readers will ransack a pile of “sticking” fiction if it is mixed with one or two new books and left unattended for a few moments, and carry much of it off in triumph. Readers of Western novels will recognise the principle of “Salting” a gold-mine. A shelf near the counter with some such notice as “Books are not issued from these shelves” would be an even better ploy. Again, during a busy period, Branchmen may leave a pile of books on the counter instead of removing it (the pile) to the rear, works which it is desired to issue being infiltrated into it. Whether this conveys something of the atmosphere

of the bargain basement or for some other reason books so left exercise a powerful fascination on readers. A less scrupulous method of issuing books, and one resorted to only by the desperate, is to present the urchin who asks for two murders and a love with something choice by Dostoevsky, or a couple of obscure Priestleys. Surprisingly enough, so strange are the ways of man, borrowers so treated have been known to send for more.

The Date-Label Gambit

An experiment which can produce very interesting results is this: take a persistently sticking novel and insert upon the date-label a dozen or so date-stamps at intervals of ten to fourteen days, marking these unobtrusively for your own information. In many cases the book will then issue regularly on the strength of this fictitious popularity.

Some books, naturally, fail to issue through sheer lack of interest rather than through some defect in their presentation. The only thing to do with these is to get rid of them as quickly as may be. If you don't, then you may experience the devastating reply given to the present writer by a borrower invited to comment on certain outstanding books: "My husband was tidying the house, and threw them out with a lot of other rubbish."

The illustration is from "The Reader and the Bookish Manner," published by the A.A.L. at 2s. 9d.

Classifiers or Witchdoctors?

W. Howard Phillips was hotly attacked in our last issue for his comments on the alleged misuse of Dewey by the B.N.B. and library school tutors

Mr. Phillips Replies:

The blown-up load of gas (many thanks, Mr. Callander!) of Messrs. Foskett, Gann and Mills, printed in the April *Assistant*, merely illustrates some of the points I tried to make in my earlier article, "Think for Yourself—Again"; and certainly strengthens my plea for an unequivocal statement regarding the use of the Decimal Classification in the Registration examination. Discerning readers will, of course, appreciate that I did *not* condemn synthetic or close classification, neither did I advocate broad classification as such; I was *not* concerned with the qualifications (practical or otherwise) of B.N.B. classifiers; I did *not* claim that the normal use of the Dewey schedules would produce perfect or even adequate notations in all cases.

I did, however, point out that many students were misusing Dewey and my ponderings upon the possible influence of the library schools and the B.N.B. classification are surely confirmed in these three outbursts. (It is indeed a sobering thought to be assured by Mr. Mills that the B.N.B. numbers are, above all, a boon to "teachers and students of classification"). I further contended that, in the examination room at least, the *Decimal Classification* should not be subjected to experiments in synthesis which properly belong to an entirely different and less prosaic scheme. I did suggest that adaptations, thought to be necessary by individuals or organisations to overcome real or imagined weaknesses of Dewey, should not automatically be accepted as standard practice and

certainly should not be demanded even by implication in the Registration Examination.

Despite the misleading, and possibly inspired, vapourings of this trio of Special Librarian, Tutor and Tuted, it must be insisted that to the great majority of librarians all over the world, book classification is still considered merely as a means to an end, a method of producing a convenient arrangement of books and records, for both reader and staff. This does not automatically demand, except in a few very large specialised libraries for which special schemes have been or should be formulated, that every word of a title or aspect of subject matter be transcribed into notational symbols.

The *Decimal Classification* is, of course, structurally out of date and for some libraries must be considered inadequate, but it has been widely adopted throughout the world as a relatively simple scheme (when used as envisaged by its formulator) and this, in itself, helps to guarantee its continued use for many years to come. Merely to chant that the future of book classification lies in synthesis and to apply the synthetic principle of division *ad lib.* to the Dewey Schedules is no solution. The *B.N.B.* has in fact merely produced a hybrid classification, even more cumbersome in application and nonsensical in notation than the original—a scheme which, if anything, detracts from the general usefulness of this competent and useful national bibliography (students and teachers apart!). I must reiterate my previous contention that the examiners, as practical librarians, can hardly penalise the “normal” and correct use of Dewey in the Registration Examination (opportunities for legitimate number building and the production of long notations do, of course, abound in the printed schedules).

Finally, on a more personal note, may I express my gratification that because of, or despite, a seeming weakness in a certain correspondence course, Mr. Foskett can now speak from a wealth of at least two years' experience . . . and proclaim my delight in the vision of the young Gann uplifted from chaos by the mumbo-jumbo of a magic formula incanted perhaps by the witchdoctor, Mr. Mills!

A Tutor Supports Phillips

From S. J. Teague, Classification Tutor, Croydon Technical College:—

Your correspondents have ignored Mr. Phillips' comments which bear directly on the Registration examination in practical classification for students opting to use the Dewey Decimal Scheme.

The main point is that a candidate has every right to know just what the examiners expect of him, and, as Mr. Phillips suggests, it is time that the L.A. stated that *B.N.B.* variations on the Dewey Decimal Scheme are not required in this practical examination. These ideas deriving from Ranganathan are valid and most useful in teaching classification theory and in critically examining the various schemes, as well as in adopting a faulty classification scheme to the requirements of a National Bibliography.

We did not need Mr. Foskett to explain that the examples quoted were wrong. Phillips demonstrated that synthesis *to a degree not in the schedules* leads students to class books thus in the wrong class.

Mr. Phillips implies that some Library School students, instructed in synthesis with the aim of assigning a classmark as nearly co-extensive with the content of the book as possible, are failing the examination and later taking correspondence courses and evening classes, and demonstrating their ability to classify by producing these impossible notations.

MOBILE LIBRARIES

A Tardy Toot!

By Sheila Bannister

This winter, at least, I have not had to combine the post of unofficial snow-plough with that of mobile librarian, so I have a little time to set pen to paper and, inspired by the editor's call in the February *Assistant Librarian*, somewhat belatedly take up Mr. Hoptrough's challenge.

It seems to me that the only satisfactory answer to his remarks would be a new text-book on Mobile Librarianship. The lack of literature on this subject will, I believe, be remedied when the post-war generation of mobile librarians reaches the years of discretion and positions of authority. So far as I know, none of our older librarians has experience of operating a mobile library for day after day, week after week, for any length of time. Unless one has actually served this apprenticeship, one cannot, I think, really appreciate the problems, difficulties—and pleasures—attached to operating a mobile library. It is yet another subject on which it is far too easy to propound theories.

However, since there is no room for the technicalities of a text-book within the pages of *The Assistant Librarian*, here are a few points which may be of general interest.

For maximum efficiency it is necessary, I think, to staff all mobile libraries, from the largest trailer library to the smallest travelling library designed to manoeuvre the ruttiest of cart-tracks, with a qualified librarian and a driver-assistant. To find a potential McColvin and an embryo Henry Ford combined in the same person would be a stroke of luck unlikely to fall to the lot of any library authority.

The moment one signs one's papers as a mobile librarian, carburettors, anti-freeze, distributors, dynamos and petrol consumption assume a major importance in one's life. I have often thought during the past two years that a diploma in motor mechanics would have been more useful than a Pass in Group A of Registration.

Let me correct the erroneous impression which many non-mobile-librarians seem to hold—that the post is a sinecure, involving a pleasant trip round the countryside and stamping a few books. Book-selection, in so far as it is within the control of the librarian-in-charge, is very important. With the limited space at one's disposal, every book must be of value to some reader; there is no room for dead stock. Non-fiction stock must be selected with an eye to meeting as many queries as possible—a week's delay may be vital if someone's cow is about to breathe its last.

The art of the reader's adviser is very highly developed on a mobile library. With the time limit laid down by the route schedules, a high proportion of readers require help in choosing their books. Many readers prefer to leave the task entirely to the librarian, who has to develop a phenomenal memory in order not to offer Mrs. Brown the book which she has read only three weeks previously. (The rapid circulation of stock from route to route does obviate this difficulty a little). There is also the problem of choosing books for people whom one seldom meets, usually men who are at work when the library calls and whose wives come in to collect their books. My own vehicle does operate three evenings a week, but, even so, some villages can have only day-time visits.

There is a very close personal relationship between the mobile librarian and the readers. Because the librarian puts in an appearance regularly once a week or once a fortnight, the readers believe that he has no other existence and consequently relate many of their private affairs and opinions to him. On account of this personal relationship between librarian and reader, it would be difficult to enforce many of the rules and regulations to be found in a normal branch library, such as fines.

One of the most important things to remember is that a reader cannot visit the library again for at least another week—it simply won't be there. It is, therefore, almost morally wrong to allow an elderly lady, whose tastes lie in the romantic field, to take out Ivy Compton-Burnett's latest novel under the impression that it is a light romance. Off-moments should have no place in the working life of a mobile librarian, if each reader is going to get full value from the service.

The appreciation of the readers who are served more than compensates for the arctic conditions which one is expected to survive during the winter. (One can often run a pleasant side-line in shovelling snow). The good use made of mobile and travelling libraries throughout many rural districts bears witness to the good work which their librarians are doing. Let us have a few more toots!

An Angry Honk

By Joan Firth

Having read the article by the two Leicestershire mobile librarians in your February issue, I felt compelled to make some reply.

With your permission I should like to take this account a point at a time, omitting the first paragraph which is too horrible for comment.

These librarians call themselves librarian/drivers, by which I presume they are librarians who can drive. If this is so, then I am at a loss to understand their unprofessional outlook, and their apparent inability to cope with everyday problems. If, however, they are drivers who are obliged to act as librarians, then they have my sympathy, and I can well understand the defeatist tone of the article.

Assuming that they are professional librarians—do they have to tackle the job as though they were delivering the groceries. They refer, for example, to the "van," which is a terrible word and should never be used in connection with a vehicular library. "Non-fiction" is another unfortunate expression which sets up inhibitions in a reader's mind at once. "Non-fiction" *sounds* dull. A "General" ticket for "General" books enables the librarian to lead the reader gently and painlessly on to better books.

It was the paragraph in which the Leicester librarians bemoan the difficulty of "enforcing" two fiction and two non-fiction books on each reader, which really made me feel that I could not keep silent. Who, in heaven's sake ever heard of "enforcing" anyone to take books which they do not want. Display, exploit, praise your books, and influence and persuade your readers by all means—but enforce!

Then we come to the pathetic picture of a harassed housewife trying to choose books for the rest of the family, and apparently several other families. *Of course* the poor soul does not know what to choose. She may not even be a reader herself, and if she is, she will certainly be bewildered when faced by about 2,000 books arranged in such a way as to baffle her on purpose, or so it seems to many readers. But what is

the function of a librarian? Is it not to put the right books into the hands of the right reader? Then why has this harassed housewife to do her own choosing? My borrowers simply hand me their tickets and say "Two for Mr. A., and the usual for Mr. B." I am proud to think that they have confidence in my choice, and I cannot imagine any librarian worthy of the name allowing borrowers to flounder among the books, finally taking quite unsuitable ones. I cannot think of a quicker way of losing borrowers.

Of course an evening service is the ideal at which to aim, and unless Leicestershire is very unusual, there will be no shortage of drivers. My experience is that supply far exceeds demand.

Then we come to the sad cry about the difficulties of holiday issues. Of course we all know that "double issue" for holidays does cause extra work, and certain difficulties. The greatest of these is caused by borrowers not bringing back *all* their books after a holiday, thus making it difficult to find all the issues when two are in a pocket. The complaint that readers bring the books back in a state of "chaos" seems very odd to me. Surely all that is necessary is for the reader to hand the books to the librarian who will then put them in alphabetical order. By taking the first, third and every alternative book in turn, all the issues will come to light, *providing* that they have been "doubled up" in strict alphabetical order on the day of issue. The blame for any "chaos" must surely be at the librarian's door. If the difficulty is caused by the fact that the vehicles have no provision for cupboards or lockers, then I would respectfully suggest that Leicestershire should change its designer of mobile libraries.

Having read to the last paragraph, one is not surprised by then to read in all seriousness—"but is it necessary to have a qualified assistant on each van?" No, if we regard books as commodities, to be dumped at people's houses in "enforced" numbers, then obviously a qualified librarian is superfluous. The man who used to drive the ice cream van will do just as well. If we regard a period of service on a mobile library as a penance, as these writers obviously do, a period during which they are going to miss all those wonderful classes and meetings (why should they miss them if they are based on H.Q. and do not operate an evening service?) then the best and most qualified staff will not work on the Mobile libraries. Surely the implication cannot be that old popular misconception that country people are a "bit dim." I know from my own experience that true country folk are more intelligent, read a better type of book, and are more appreciative of the service than the housing estate dweller on the fringe of the town. Nothing could be worse for the service than librarians in charge of Mobile libraries (I refuse to call them "Van assistants") serving for short periods only. Frequent changes of staff are upsetting to borrowers, and to the service.

If Mobile Librarianship is regarded in its true light, it is the most rewarding of all branches of librarianship. The closeness of the link between borrower and librarian is something which is not possible in any other kind of library, and the work is so limitless and so eminently satisfying. Anyone can have the juggling with Dewey and catalogue cards for me—that is not true librarianship.

These views are my own and may not be those of the Authority by whom I am employed. I hope they are, however, otherwise I have got the wrong idea about my work,—but somehow I do not think so.

COMMENT from Miss Jo Eldridge, A.L.A., Swindon Public Library:

The original article was a statement of facts relating to a particular service (covering rural, industrial and mining villages) in reply to Mr. Hoptrough's request for statistics to which Mrs. Firth has not contributed here.

To enlarge on some of the facts: "Enforce" was a very unhappy word; it should have been "restrict to".

Mrs. Firth's issue system in West Riding [sic] seems different from that in Leicestershire; perhaps she will explain it as this is the kind of information Mr. Hoptrough seems to require. In Leicestershire all the issues for one family go in one ticket.

The "Librarian/driver" in Leicestershire is the only employee of the County Council in attendance on each Travelling Library, and, where possible, is a chartered librarian. In answer to advertisements for the last vacancy, only *one* reply was received from a person not already on the staff—the supply is hardly exceeding the demand.

In that area, Branch and District meetings are invariably in the afternoon, and often 30-50 miles away; unless we used annual leave, the only ones we could attend were week-end conferences. Drivers can and do go to evening classes—in Nottingham.

Judging from the advertisements in the T.L.S., many small county library branches are staffed by unqualified assistants; this does not seem professionally desirable either, but the lack must be made up for by qualified regional librarians with wide abilities. This can apply to a mobile service, too.

Otherwise, I personally endorse all Mrs. Firth's opinions and also those of Mr. South (*L.A.R.*, April, 1954), but while she has probably had a driver discharging issues and stamping books for her, I did that myself whilst trying at the same time to give the kind of service she advocates. After 2½ years, I have taken my eyes off the road to turn my attention wholly upon the readers.

London Invites

—you to **THE THEATRE**
to see a matinee of Enid Bagnold's play, "The Chalk Garden,"
with Edith Evans in the leading part.

—to **TEA**
at Lyon's Corner House, Coventry Street.

—to the A.G.M. of the A.A.L.,
at Chaucer House, at 6.30 p.m., followed by

—**THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**
of Miss E. J. Willson, F.L.A.

The date: Wednesday, 15th May, 1957.

Tea and the theatre will cost 11s. 6d. There are a limited number of tickets and applications should be sent as soon as possible to the Greater London Division's Hon. Secretary, P. D. Pocklington, A.L.A., Public Library, Chelmsford.

Annual General Meeting, 1957

Please bring your copy of the April issue of the *Assistant Librarian*, containing the Agenda and Annual Report.

The Librarian Educator

A review by **Eric Moon**

Students are told repeatedly to-day of the importance of periodicals, and the First Professional examiners are insistent in their demands that assistants should at least know something of periodicals in the field of librarianship. Reviews appear in the professional press from time to time, but all too often they concentrate on books. This short article is offered in the hope that it might be the first of a series of reviews of particularly noteworthy issues of one or other of our professional journals.

In view of the fact that the *Librarian* devotes so much of its space to (and derives so much of its copy from) the *Assistant Librarian*, it is perhaps appropriate that this journal should reciprocate by devoting some of its space to the cause of publicizing the *Librarian* to a wider audience than it now possesses.

The issue under consideration is dated November-December, 1956. It reached those members who receive it sometime in the second week of February, 1957. Undaunted, Thomas Cakebread, from his glass house on page 206, hurls a fistful of stones at the *Library World* for issuing its August-September volume to readers early in October. Cakebread's glee at this slip brings on a moment of gravity, and he pronounces on the *Library World* thus: "Not perhaps the liveliest of our journals, but at times . . . certainly the most pompous."

Vol. XLV, No. 10, of the *Librarian* (the independent professional journal) is a double number devoted to Education for Librarianship. It opens with a *Foursome on Education*, a dialogue umpired by Mr. K. C. Harrison, in which he purports to gather together the views of a librarian, a student, an examiner and a tutor. Mr. Harrison claims that anonymity has been preserved so that the frank opinions of those taking part in the conversation could be recorded. It is more charitable to believe that this is Mr. Harrison's first attempt to present fiction in Nigel Balchin's *Lord, I Was Afraid* manner. Of the caricatures taking part, the student speaks either "impetuously" or "with relish," while the librarian has a wider range, managing to deliver his views "smoothly," "sagely" and "uneasily." No attempt is made to describe the delivery of K.C.H., the examiner or the tutor. If they were wise they spoke in whispers. Such "frank" opinions are as dangerous as dandelions.

There follows a nice piece of admitted "stone-slinging" by Mr. Bearman, County Librarian of West Sussex. Mr. Bearman does a reasonable job of destruction, and leaves little doubt as to how he would answer the L.A. essay question, *Technician or Bookman?* He is followed by Mr. Neville Dain, Head of the Leeds School of Librarianship, hot in pursuit of a philosophy of librarianship, via a consideration of *Public Library Standards and Education in Librarianship*. This article contains some pungent and acute comments on the bookstocks of most public libraries, and is sufficiently thought-provoking to make one look forward to Mr. Dain's second instalment, promised for the next issue, presumably due in January (the January issue was eventually published—at the end of February. EDITOR). The series of pronouncements on education is wound up with the assistant's point of view, presented by Mr. Pinnock, M.A., A.L.A., Reference Librarian at Eastbourne.

The always excellent column by J.F.W.B. concentrates on this occasion on surveys, O. & M., and the *Directory of Metropolitan Public Libraries*. Then, following a tub-thumping letter from Mr. Foskett and

a defence of B.N.B. ordering by Mr. Butcher, we arrive at page 206. Here commence three columns of *Irritations* experienced by a pseudonymous gent called Cakebread. We were under the impression that bakers mix cake and bread only when both are stale. Our impression is now regularly confirmed.

A poacher and a parasite by profession, Cakebread derives almost the whole of his material from other professional periodicals. Supreme among his talents is the ability to write equally badly in either verse or prose. On reflection that is perhaps unfair—nothing could be *quite* as bad as the verse. *The Library World*, the *London Librarian* and the *Assistant* are his favourite grazing grounds, and Messrs. Smith and Moon seem to make him scratch more than most. He admits that the *Assistant* is not without humour and is acute enough to detect that "it is at its funniest when it is most serious." We bow in 'umble gratitude to Cakebread—it is not often that we are given credit for being serious. It is, of course, not nearly so difficult to detect when Cakebread is being serious. Then he becomes pontifical and platitudinous, as in the pronouncement re the *Library World* above. Most of the time he is straining desperately to be funny, and when at his most riotous, he lapses into rhyme and metre. If you are one of those who will try anything for a laugh, try Cakebread.

This notable issue of the *Librarian* finally takes us through the *Children's Room* to a series of *rapid reviews*. We presume that this means "rapid" in execution—it could not refer to the appearance of the reviews. B.N.B. may take from heart from these titles, most of which will by now have reached one of the cumulated volumes.

The reviews are arranged in simplified Dewey order. At 923.2 we find a review of a book on Richard Austen Butler which is described as "the first book in a new series" (our italics). The reviewer concludes "we shall look forward to the appearance of the next Rockliff monograph, which is to be on Sir Anthony Eden."

The review of the next book, also classified at 923.2, commences: "This is the second book in the Rockliff Political Monograph series, which began so well with Francis Boyd's book on R. A. Butler." It is on Sir Anthony Eden. The book is described as a "complete and up-to-date picture." One cannot say the same for the review, which talks of the story being brought right up to the *latest* Cabinet re-shuffle (our italics again).

Generally these reviews may be said to maintain a standard. What that standard is may be ascertained from the following comment on Alfrida Vipont's life of Arnold Rowntree—"this is a story well worth telling, and the book is certainly one that should be in a public library." The reviewer of Gilbert Harding's *Book of Manners* informs us that "a dose of the Harding corrective will do none of us any harm."

This consideration of the *Librarian's* double issue may best be concluded with the following words from its own review of Karl Marx's *Selected Writings*. "We are grateful for the crumbs of what must have been a great feast, which this volume offers us." Perhaps Gilbert Harding's indigestion tablets would help, too.

SILLY STATISTICS "if the books taken home by readers each day were stacked in a pile, flat on their sides, the pile would be much higher than the Empire State Building, television mast and all." (From the President's report, Bulletin of the New York Public Library). This is the sort of thing that once led another American to remark "The only statistic I can remember is that if all the people who go to sleep in Church were laid end to end, they'd be a lot more comfortable."—EDITOR.

Point of No Return

by Brian Selby

The last days of Mr. W. Tynemouth's presidency of the A.A.L. were starred by his exploration of the unknown land beyond *The Point of No Return*; his talk which followed the A.G.M. of the London Division.

My Tynemouth commented that librarianship "has very few men of foresight and genius." In 1956 he himself led the A.A.L. with statesmanship and wit, but perhaps he will be best remembered for his clear view of the current situation of British librarianship, exemplified by the foresight of his approach to the problem of easing the public libraries away from local government. "Municipal domination ended at Southport," affirmed Mr. Tynemouth, but he also believed that the Southport A.G.M. of the L.A. in 1955 was "the point of no return" for attempts to oust the authorities from the L.A. by the thinly veiled force of the professional membership.

But local government politics disregard the user of the library service. It is the users of the service whose interests the profession has at heart, and it is in those interests that the L.A. should be the voice of professional opinion, especially when standards of service are at stake. The L.A. Council memorandum was the ground over which a battle was fought between the Association of Municipal Corporations and the L.A.; between the opinion of authority members and library committees, which is not necessarily the opinion of the majority of public library users, and our profession striving to make possible a higher standard of library service which would be available, through a nationally integrated service, to the country at large.

My Tynemouth rejected the idea that a revolution from inside the profession against the authorities is the way to resolve the situation. He came out in favour of the imposing of a new structure on our nation wide library service from above. He suggested that the profession should lobby the House of Commons and use all possible influence in the national political parties to create in the government an awareness of the need for "good library service not only to individuals, but to industry and education" as the precursor of legislation to make such a service possible. Mr. Tynemouth stated his belief that we shall see "library service as an important feature of national life in a very short time."

Those who desire for the very near future a national library service nationally organized and nationally financed, providing the facilities which a 20th century civilization needs and which the limited resources of local government cannot provide, will accept Mr. Tynemouth as a clear thinking, cool headed champion of their cause.

The discussion which followed his talk was not so encouraging. Rash statements and hot headed assertions that authority members should be summarily conveyed to the headsman *en bloc* are indicative

H. KARNAC
(BOOKS)
LTD.

58, GLOUCESTER RD.,
LONDON, S.W.7.
WESTERN 7908.

*New and Secondhand Books on
all subjects.*

of the lack of thought which is so common in British librarianship today. Further evidence of this is that in the election of the G.L.D. committee for 1957, no more than 605 voting papers were returned out of 1958 issued. It must be realized that the achievement of a national library service on paper will be meaningless unless each member of an informed and constructively active profession is ready to work like a slave to make a high standard of service a fact at each service point in the country.

Commenting on the attempt Mr. Bryon of Eccles is making to launch a large scale investigation of our present library services, Mr. Tynemouth's attitude was one of doubt about the value of surveys in general and of this project in particular. But it seems to me that if the ideal of a successful national library service is to be achieved, there must be more factual analysis of our present services so that their failings will not be perpetuated in a new national service. I believe that we must seriously and constructively consider our professional aims and methods so that the librarian of the future will have an active individual idea of library service as part of the economic, educational and cultural life of the nation. Without such a positive approach to our work, the present "point of no return" could easily become a point of no departure for the future.

ASSISTANCE TO STAFF—3

Tony Shearman

On cold and wet winter days, most people will have said at some time: "Let's chuck it all and go to the South Seas!" Fathers are particularly prone to this and to the desire to get away (with the family) once and for all. "This country has had it," they say, "there's not room for us all." Generally these statements are not literal; but despite this an ever increasing number of people are emigrating from this country.

The decision to emigrate brings a host of problems. Some of the people come to the library for the answers. They want a book telling them what it is like out there; how wages, cost of living, social facilities compare with this country; and they want the information to be recent. Publishers are slowly realising that the demand is sufficient for them to risk issuing books on the various countries concerned: two such being *Venturing to Canada* by R. Dorian and *Portrait of New Zealand* by D. Hall, both published in 1955; while a new reference book *The British Commonwealth* (Europa Publications, Ltd., £5 5s., 1956) brings up-to-date information about the Commonwealth in one volume. It claims to contain "concise, dependable information about a unique experiment in international co-operation involving over a quarter both of the land area of the globe and of the world's population." The plan is based on *Europa* and *Orbis* with the usual features—the statistical survey, political set-up and the lists of academic institutions (though for any specific enquiry, you would use *Yearbook of the Universities of the Commonwealth*), publishers, societies, libraries, etc.; but with the addition of initialed articles on the Commonwealth as a whole, and on the geography, history, economy and relations with the rest of the Commonwealth, of a particular country.

There is also the *Empire and Commonwealth Yearbook* and, of course, yearbooks of the various individual countries such as the *Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*.

GUILELESS IN GAZA

Council Notes—March 14

An agenda as gentle-looking as any spring lamb ushered in education as the lion of the March Council meeting. It was coincidental that the party of observers present were students from the N.W. Polytechnic School of Librarianship, though more hardened political observers might have been led to suspect deliberate stage management.

Minor skirmishes between the Education and Finance Committee have been known before. Now Council seems to resemble the Gaza strip with these two bodies poised bomb-in-hand along either side, while the Press and Publications committee tread the delicate path between like a United Nations force altogether unsure about the worth of treaties and gentlemanly agreements.

On this occasion the Education Committee, whose declining balances deter them not from philanthropic gestures, wished to increase the payments to compilers, editors and revisers of correspondence courses. Finance Committee took the view that the Education Committee's request was premature, a new scale having been recommended and adopted only last September. Defer for six months, said Finance, and we will review all fees and charges connected with correspondence courses.

When the committees reported to Council the fight was on for the floating votes carried by the members of the Press and Publications Committee. "Nobody likes us, nobody ever adopts our recommendations," came the cry from the Chairman and some members of the Education Committee, but it seemed unlikely that Council would be swayed by this straightforward sob-stuff, and Mr. Phillips fatalistically forecast the result by announcing as he rose, "When I speak on financial matters the motion is always lost." So it was, but only by one vote after a recount, and undoubtedly the Education Committee live to fight again another day, even if that day be six months away.

More peacefully received from the Education Committee was the news that the Martin Award of 5 guineas is to go to Mrs. B. Cracknell (Hunts. County) for the best result by a correspondence course student in the November First Professional Examination. Proposals on the draft syllabus for the Registration Examination which appeared in the *March Record* are to be considered at the next meeting. Progress was reported on a new course for the Teacher/Librarian Certificate, which Mr. Phillips believed to be "another attempt to lower professional standards." Mr. Thompson, an oral tutor for this certificate, admitted to having been often exasperated when trying to explain librarianship to people who don't understand, but never quite so exasperated as now, when he had to explain to "people who don't understand to a more advanced degree."

The Press and Publications Committee reported that Dr. Walford has decided to relinquish the editorship of the A.A.L. Guides. Council heard this news with the greatest regret and asked that their thanks be conveyed to Dr. Walford. All students owe him a debt of gratitude, for these publications could not have been compiled and produced so cheaply and well but for the help voluntarily given by an already busy man. From Publications Committee also came news of two experimental filmstrips to be produced on charging methods and library fittings and furniture.

The Council is to make a donation of 5 guineas to the John Rylands Library Fund as a token of its appreciation of the value of this library over a long period to students of librarianship and bibliography, and is to ask the L.A. Council to make a further donation (which it has since refused to do.—Ed.). Several of the A.A.L. divisions are starting subscription funds.

The Policy Committee, at its first meeting for over a year, discussed grading of public library posts and negotiations between NALGO and the L.A., and felt that the Staff Side of the N.J.C. should be informed that all our members are not wildly happy about their conduct of negotiations on behalf of librarians. The Council agreed to the Policy Committee's recommendation that the L.A. should be pressed to issue a report from the Reorganisation Sub-Committee which was set up over a year ago to deliberate on a new structure for the Asso-

ciation, and which has since been as silent and ominous as any Star Chamber. (The L.A. has now agreed to this and a report was in the April *Record*.—Ed.). Concern was expressed at the small percentage of votes returned in professional elections, and the A.A.L. is to attempt to remedy this in respect of its own elections.

Members of the Council received with their papers a memorandum by the Vice-President, Mr. Tomlinson, urging the need for up-to-date job classifications applicable to different kinds and sizes of libraries, and a motion is to be forwarded to the L.A. urging them to prepare and publish such schedules, containing definitions and examples of duties appropriate to various posts and the minimum qualifications necessary to them.

Under an item dealing with the Annual General Meeting, the Honorary Secretary reported that no motions had been received, and Messrs. Pocklington and Phillips hurriedly conferred to produce what can only be called "a fast one" to remedy this unusual situation. Mr. W. G. Smith, inaudible and choked more by sweets than emotion, rose to suggest that the motion was out of order. Mr. Pocklington spoke more often than has ever been allowed by Standing Orders, and Council were informed that the President was "letting him have a bit of rope" ("object unspecified" said an aside). Consultation on the platform resulted in the motion being ruled out of order, and Mr. Pocklington was given until midnight to frame another motion or gather another eight signatures for his original one, which was basically an amendment to the Association rules.

The meeting closed on a lighter note, if that is possible, with Mr. A. C. Jones pleading for a change of buttons in the lift at Chaucer House. Students wishing to visit the L.A. Library or the Education Department are still called upon to press buttons marked respectively *Society of Genealogists* and *Museums Association*. The L.A. House and Library Committee is to be informed that these two bodies left Chaucer House some time ago.

ERIC MOON.

ASKEWS OF PRESTON

KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE
BRITISH ISLES FOR
EFFICIENCY, SERVICE
AND COURTESY

ESTABLISHED OVER
75 YEARS

JAMES ASKEW AND SON, LTD.
CORPORATION STREET
PRESTON

Letter from a reader: Re my books. I'm afraid we have a lot of sickness with the children and I destroyed one of them. However, I still have one left. The doctor has been coming for months and I honestly think that it's better to burn them.

Your Letters

—are so numerous these days that the Editor must reserve the right to shorten them sometimes. He hopes that this will not stop anyone writing—but please be as brief as possible.

Snow White and the Seven Sins

A noteworthy point concerning fairy-tales is made by S. J. Teague, of Chelsea, in the letter published in the April number of the *Assistant Librarian*.

For many years now children have been terrorized and their personalities insidiously undermined by the baneful influence of the Fairy Tale. How many young readers of *Jack and the Beanstalk* have been encouraged to set foot upon the path of crime by the success of Jack's exploits in theft from the giant's castle? How many stepmothers have been made unhappy by the atmosphere of sullen distrust surrounding them, after a prolonged perusal of *Snow White and Cinderella*? And the numbers of children who have refused ever to visit their grandmothers again, fearing the perils consequent upon Red Riding Hood's journey—these statistics speak for themselves. Sometimes these unhappy results linger on into adult life; many of us know the girl with the "Bluebeard" complex who refuses to marry, or the man who demands that his wife spin five skeins of yarn before she be allowed any supper.

I would urge that not only Fairy Tales, but Nursery Rhymes be removed from the Children's Section, thus obviating any possibility of corruption from the reckless improvidence of *Mother Hubbard*, the juvenile delinquency of *Tom the Piper's Son*, and the antisocial behaviour of *Georgy-Porgy*. Had I time, I would write at more length on this important subject, but I must now return to removing several plates of a very doubtful character from a book on the biological functions of plant life.

DAPHNE R. CASTELL, *Imperial Forestry Institute, University of Oxford.*

Age Barrier

Thank you Mr. Davinson for voicing your opinion on the Library Association ruling that a person who has passed Registration is not eligible for election to the Register until he or she reaches the age of 23.

I must heartily endorse your sentiments as I am personally affected by this ruling. I became a library assistant at the age of 17 and was fortunate enough to have passed Registration by the time I was 20.

I was assured that my age would be no disadvantage when applying for an A.P.T. post, but, after writing numerous applications, this has proved to be a fallacy. It appears that I must be contented to wait a further two years before obtaining that A.P.T. post. Perhaps in the meantime the Library Association will remove this age barrier—I hope so.

PAULINE GODSALL, *Birmingham Public Libraries.*

I know Mr. Davinson is aware of the fact, but I should not like some of us to get the impression from his letter that the appropriate qualification for appointment or promotion to APT Grades I—III is the A.L.A., because it is not. Para. 28(b) of the Charter and the list of examinations issued by the Local Government Examinations Board make it quite clear that as far as the L.A. is concerned, the Registration Examination by itself is the appropriate qualification.

This is, however, a minimum qualification and it is open to employing authorities to prescribe such additional requirements for posts in their service as they think fit. If they should wish, for example, to stipulate age and service, one method is to insist on the possession of the A.L.A., against which there is no appeal on "the letter of the law."

If any of your readers, on the other hand, are occupying APT posts and, fulfilling the examination and service requirements, are being paid on a grade lower than APT purely on account of age, I would strongly advise them to seek the support of their local NALGO Branch to persuade their employers to pay

the appropriate rate and not to make use of cheap labour.

On this question of the age requirement for the Associateship, your readers may be interested in the requirements of other professional bodies in this respect (some of which have definite age requirements, while others so draw their regulations that, while no age is stipulated, you cannot in practice fulfil all the requirements for registration before a certain age). They are as follows:—

Architect 22.
Auctioneer and Estate Agent 21.
Barrister 21.
Chartered secretary 21.

Chartered surveyor 21.
Accountant 20-22 (AIMTA 22,
AACCA 20, ASAA 21, ACA 21,
CA 22).
Solicitor 21.

M. T. SLEIGHTHOLM, *Senior Assistant, Leeds Public Library.*

A Quarterly Record?

I disapprove of R. M. Lyle's proposal for the *L.A. Record* to come out quarterly and for it to be optional—surely we librarians should all be aware of the value of periodicals for the acquisition of new knowledge and comments on existing theories.

Although often initially put off by the fact that the *Record* is said to be boring, many of us at present are inveigled into reading it simply because we have paid for it, and later form the habit of reading with interest, it and other library periodicals. Were the purchase optional, fewer would form the custom of reading any library literature at all, with a consequent stagnation in outlook. Those who do find the *Record* dull are those who have a narrow viewpoint of librarianship and should not be allowed to dominate future *L.A.* policy. Even so it is doubtful if the reduction in the number of journals printed would make any great difference to the financial burden that is borne by the members, as the more articles there are consumed, the cheaper the commodity to the consumer eventually; and the amount of money spent on posting *Liaison* to members would still remain a constant item.

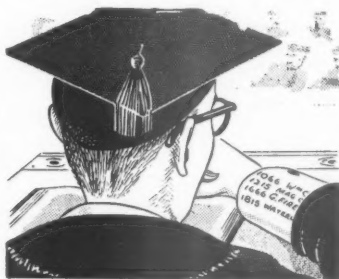
Mr. Lyle also suggests that in certain circumstances, examination fees should be reduced. The student who is sitting an examination for the tenth time needs to have his paper marked just as carefully as the student who is sitting for the first time, so why should fees be reduced for resits? Few students would claim to have worked as hard as possible for any examination, and it does not seem reasonable for the general membership continually to subsidise people who, on their own admittance, have not worked as much as they could have. Those students who are sitting for an examination for the seventh time or so should not be recompensed for their trials, but should rather be condemned for not doing enough work or for obstinately persevering in something which past

CRAMER'S for MUSIC

MUSICAL LITERATURE
AND MUSIC BINDING

139, New Bond Street
London, W.1

★ Special Music Enquiry Bureau



—but for Current Affairs he trusts KEEBING'S!

experience has shown them to be incapable of achieving. In any case the new fees are not excessive and are in line with current examination fees in other institutions where students have not initially had a chance to earn any previous salary.

KATHLEEN J. EGGLESTON, *Scottish School of Librarianship.*

Distracted, Desperate Creatures

"Why do librarians *mutter* to themselves all the time?" I was once asked as a junior. Mr. Bengé's masterly analysis in the April *Assistant* of the eerie half-world of unfulfilled desires which he believes to exist behind the mask of "Librarian," combined with your other contributors' comments on the effect of the poor creature's habits on the general public, prompt me to 'view Mr. Forshaw's outburst against non-virile librarians with deep concern. Does he not protest a little too much? And it is not, surely, too far-fetched to detect a certain over-emphasis here and there—"They can have their symphony concerts and what-not later in the day," he says, staggering back from that yawning gulf, the final ignominy of the Old Boys' Third XV.

We remember the ultimate fate of the virile hero of Mr. Kingsley Amis' aptly named novel *That uncertain feeling*: an impartial observer would be forgiven for linking his flight to the N.C.B. to certain sinister references in the letters of both Mr. Forshaw and Mr. Lyle. "Parading as happy pigs," indeed, and evidently treading the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. However, we, and Mr. Bengé, may take heart. At least one of the "literary ones" has attracted the attention of the literary world as a creator, rather than as a distributor. Mr. John Braine, who has been hailed as the latest of the angry young men, is himself a librarian.

But, despite this heartening example, there is a certain feeling of desperation in the air; it would be interesting, for example, to know whether the not uncommon advertisements in the "Situations Wanted" column of the *Bookseller* . . . "Young librarian, knowledge print, etc. . . . requires post in publishing . . ." is symptomatic of a general flight of angry young librarians, if not to the mines, then to new pastures?

Perhaps there is quite a simple solution after all. "Why are librarians such distracted, desperate creatures?" Could it be that salaries have something to do with it?

DAVID LASKEY, *Northumberland County Libraries.*

Are Librarians Human?

Mr. Bengé will have done a great service to all those who are possessed of intelligence and imagination, if his "Thoughts for the Conference" keep such people out of librarianship from the start. His words should be reprinted and distributed to every school and youth-employment agency in the country. It's a pretty hopeless prospect that he offers to a young librarian, young men are unwilling to abandon *all* hope, however much their elders may advise that grey course, and there is something very bitter in the tone with which Mr. Bengé slashes at the evasive squirmings of the trapped anti-librarians and writers *manqués*.

One morsel of very cold comfort is offered; we are supposed to calm our anxieties by reflecting that other professions are as terrifying as ours in their power to turn people into occupational caricatures of themselves. It is a hard thing to believe, but makes matters worse if accepted. The recent experience of the Winchester conference, drives one to the conclusion that *most of us are inhuman after all*. Our cards of identity were blank when we came to Winchester, and blank, but rather grubby, when we left.

Only one answer presents itself, and the predicament makes it a drastic one; but if it *is* the same outside, where is one to escape to?

JOHN A. CUNLIFFE, *Student North Western Polytechnic Library School.*

G. BLUNT & SONS LTD.

Established 1879

LIBRARY BOOKBINDERS AND BOOKSELLERS

**EUROPEAN AGENTS FOR RANGANATHAN AND VISWANATHAN
LIBRARY TEXTBOOKS**

Showroom :

100 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

Telephone : MUSEUM 5650 & 0335

Head Office and Works :

NORTH ACTON ROAD, HARLESDEN, LONDON, N.W.10

Telephone : ELGAR 7411-2-3

WASTELL'S

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY SERVICE

**THE PUBLIC AND COUNTY
LIBRARY BOOKSELLERS**

806 HIGH ROAD, LONDON, N.17

TOT. 3354/5

ESTABLISHED 1868

J. STARR & SONS, LTD.

Specialist Library Bookbinders

**Dawber Street Works
Wigan, Lanes.**

'Phone : 2 Lines
3484-5

'Grams : Starrs 3484
Wigan

One Quality only—The Best

WOODFIELD & STANLEY

LIMITED

SPECIALISTS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

BROOKFIELD MILLS, KIRKBURTON, HUDDERSFIELD

AND

THE CHILDREN'S BOOKSHOP

64, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

A. M. HALDANE
LTD.



WE SPECIALISE IN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS



B.N.B. ORDERS



SPECIAL REQUESTS



PROMPT SERVICE
especially in the London
Area



5, DENMARK STREET,
CHARING CROSS ROAD,
W.C.2
COVent Garden 0488

THE
HOLT-JACKSON
BOOK COMPANY
LIMITED



Public and County
Library Booksellers



MONTAUBAN
CHAMBERS,
ST. ANNES-ON-SEA,
LANCS.

Telephone: St. Annes 575



London Showroom:
CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C.1
59, BRITTON STREET,
Telephone: Clerkenwell 3250.

W. & R. HOLMES
(BOOKS) LTD.

W. & R. HOLMES are in a position to offer the highest qualified service in all matters connected with library supply; their library department is organized to that end.

**AGENTS FOR THE
H. W. WILSON CO.'S
LIBRARY AND
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL
PUBLICATIONS**

W. & R. HOLMES
(BOOKS) LTD.
P.O. BOX No. 192
3-11 DUNLOP STREET, GLASGOW